

Guidance Statement from the Association of Program Directors in Vascular Surgery

Regarding the 2024/25 Application Cycle

On behalf of the APDVS Executive Council (Dawn Coleman, Benjamin Pearce, Misty Humphries, Gabriela Velazquez, Jonathan Bath)

Thank you to all Program Directors and program leadership for your engagement, participation, and energy in making the 2023/2024 Match cycle a success for Vascular Surgery. We saw an impressive number of applications for residency and fellowship as interest in our specialty continues to improve. The efforts of our collective group in recruitment, innovation, and adaptation to changing landscapes of interview processes have led to successful Match rates for the past several years. This January, Dr. David Rigberg, on behalf of the APDVS, presented results from the Vascular In-person for Students In the maTch (VISIT) Trial with data suggesting that over half of our applicants adjusted rank lists based on program visits.

Fortunately, the virtual interview process appears to be a sound methodology for evaluation of potential matches as our match the past 3 years has been excellent. However, it is evident that some degree of personal contact is deemed beneficial by future trainees. Yet, we recognize that the ultimate decision as to what format a program chooses or is preferred by the potential resident remains complex and best handled at the institutional level.

In response, the APDVS issues the following guidelines to vascular surgery program directors in the United States regarding the upcoming application cycle for Integrated Vascular Surgery Residencies.

Recommendations:

The priorities in offering these recommendations are to promote an equitable and transparent application, interview, and match process, as well as to safeguard the vascular surgical education of medical students. In light of these priorities, our recommendations are as follows. We ask that each program director and institutional leadership team review the documents from the AAMC (Interviews in GME, Where Do We Go From Here?). Briefly summarized, the table below gives general recommendations which we want to offer to our APDVS membership.

Table 1. Reasons for choosing one interview format over another and steps to success for each. **Interview Format Reasons You Might Choose an Interview Format Steps to Success**

Interview Format	Reasons You Might Choose an Interview Format	Steps to Success
Virtual Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many applicants are out-of-state or require travel. • Commitment to reducing carbon footprint. • Flexibility in scheduling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer virtual recruiting activities to all applicants. • Develop technology standards and training for faculty conducting virtual interviews.
Hybrid (i.e., an applicant can select either in-person or virtual interviews)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of local and out-of-state applicant pool. • Need to showcase less well-known or rural area. • Flexibility in scheduling. • Gives applicants and faculty choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policies, procedures, and interviewer training to ensure standardization across formats and to mitigate risk of bias. • Ensure admissions/selection committees are blinded to interview format. • Inform applicants about steps taken to make the hybrid approach equitable. • Offer virtual recruiting activities to all applicants.
In-Person Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most applicants are not out-of-state or do not require extended travel plans. • Need to showcase less well-known or rural area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer financial support to applicants who may need it for travel.

- We recommend individual programs review options presented by the AAMC and carefully consider the advantages and risks of the different options. Mitigation strategies should be outlined to applicants by individual programs based on what they choose to offer.
- Programs are encouraged to send out interview invitations for integrated residency no later than October 31st and allow up to one week for the candidates to respond before extending an offer to a different applicant. This will maintain the integrity of the offer process and prevent programs from “overbooking” interview days, leading to cancellations.
- Programs opting for Hybrid interviews should make clear whether the in-person component will affect their rank list.
- Holistic review of applications is strongly recommended as part of the Vascular

Surgery residency selection process. This includes:

- USMLE Step 1 and COMLEX Level 1 scores should be de-emphasized since it is PASS/FAIL in the 2024-25 Application Cycle.
 - Programs should disclose how Step 2 and COMLEX Level 2 will be considered.
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- We strongly urge programs to only offer the number of interview positions available and disclose expectations to applicants about interview response time. The situation is constantly evolving. The APDVS will continue to monitor and may periodically issue further guidance to promote a safe and equitable match process.